Serial No. 10/615,568 4

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the multi-bridge is operable to record in a register that the VLAN identified by the identifier of the data packet uses the ports of the particular set. A similar amendment has been made to claim 4.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-7 are rejected under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Varghese et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,560,236 B1) in view of Van Seters et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,978,378.)

Varghese discloses a network device including a bridge having ports that are partitioned into groups, with a group being associated with a respective virtual network. It permits the bridge to isolate the virtual networks from one another. Claim 1 requires that a multi-bridge is operable to record, upon receiving a data packet by one of at least two ports of a particular set, that the VLAN identified by the identifier of the data packet uses ports of the particular set. This feature is not disclosed in Varghese. As recognised by the Examiner, Varghese does not disclose that the multi-bridge is operable to register upon receiving a data packet by one of the at least two ports of a particular set, that the VLAN identified by the identifier of the data packet uses the ports of the particular set, at least when the multi-bridge has not yet registered that the VLAN identified by the identifier of the data packet uses the particular set on which the data packet was received. Thus, also Varghese does not disclose that the multi-bridge records the ports, as claimed in claim 1 as amended.

Van Seters et al. discloses a bridge/router device in which a predefined table indicates which ports within the bridge/router are associated with a VLAN (see Abstract). The Examiner suggests that the system of Van Seters involves registering which ports are validly included in a VLAN, as the setting of a port gives an indication of its status with respect to a VLAN. However, claim 1 as amended requires that the multi-bridge records the ports in a register. The system of Van Seters et al. does not involve recording the ports in a register. The

Serial No. 10/615,568 5

association between ports and particular VLANs is set out in a predefined table (see Abstract). Van Seters does not disclose a mechanism to record which ports are included in a VLAN.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the invention as claimed in claim 1 is patentable over Varghese et al, Van Seters et al. or any combination of their teachings. Similar reasoning applies to the other independent claims, claim 4 and claim 7, which accordingly are also patentable over these references. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that each of these claims is allowable. In addition, each of the remaining claims (i.e., claims 2, 3, 5 and 6) is directly or indirectly dependent on an allowable claim and for this reason at least are also therefore allowable.
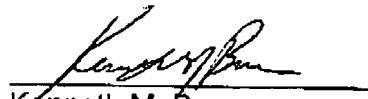
Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in light of this submission. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone conversation would be helpful, please contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at 908 582 5998.

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If any additional fees are due with respect to this amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 12-2325.

Respectfully submitted,
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Lucent Technologies Inc.
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